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RHYMES

By J. I. D. B.

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PREFACE.

*MY first attempts, with wav'ring fears,
Go forth upon these pages.
That they will change the beliefs of years,
Or the philosophy of ages,
I am not the egotist to believe.
Yet some may here find a new truth, half expressed,
Or here some lonesome hour may beguile ;
And here some saddened soul may lay at rest
The ghost that robs him of his smile,
And for a little while forget to grieve.*

J. I. D. B.

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THE NECROPOLIS OF THE SEA.

GRANT, O Death ! that I at last may lie at rest
In old Ocean's arms ; upon my breast
No clods, and neath my reposing head
The jewelled pillow of Ocean's royal bed.
Shrouded in her mighty depths of shade,
Coffined in her eternal silence, let me be laid.
The hollow pride that marks the resting-place
Of all the nations of my race —
The sculptured grandeur wrought for Vanity's eyes
Above the worm where mouldering beauty lies —
I'd see no more. The great, the clown,
The ruler and lowliest subject, lie down
In that vast necropolis of the sea,
Equal, at last, in Death's final destiny.
Distinction's haughty mark and wealth's shallow token
The dead of the land may claim. The old Ocean
Is more just. Within her mighty fold
The dead are one ; prince and peasant, young and old,
Have rung for them the same mighty dirge
Of Ocean's moaning wind and sighing surge.
No priest is there, nor pomp, nor hollow show,
Nor fashion's forced ceremonial flow
Of tears. Ocean's sublimest anthems roll
For rich and poor alike. And the tired soul
Longing to lie down to a last long rest,
Findeth no easier couch than old Ocean's breast.

EVENING.


 N the ramparts of the evening skies
 Glean a thousand burnished shields ;
 And blood-red banners are seen to rise,
 As on a battle-field.

The solemn Night, as the Day doth die,
 Hastens with darkening shroud,
 And drapes the bier where his form doth lie
 In royal-purple cloud.

O'er all the fields and wooded land
 The lengthening shadows creep,
 As silently as death's cold hand
 Falls o'er us in our sleep.

I see the gleaming river's face
 Where the veils of mist arise,
 As when mighty thoughts have left their trace
 In a poet's flashing eyes.

O'er all the valley, where the rays
 Of light die out in fitful beams,
 I hear a mighty hymn of praise
 As in old musicians' dreams.

The distant trees that fade away
 In the coming of the night,
 Remind me of a host in line arrayed
 And marching out of sight.

The evening air in fragrant flood
 Sheddeth round its sweet perfume,
 And upon the breast of every bud
 Gleams the jewel of its bloom.

The river that so distant winds,
 With scarce a ripple on its breast,
 I liken to a happy mind
 That a perfect love hath blessed.

Through swaying limbs and trembling leaves
 That murmur above my head,
 I hear the sighs of those who grieve
 For a love that is ever dead.

The poetic soul of the evening wind
 Breathes on the harp of thought;
 And Memory, on the page of mind,
 Writes the anthems that are wrought.

DOT LAMB.

DOT Mary had a schmall vite lamb
 Mit hair so fine like silik ;
 Und everyvere dot lamb vos vent,
 He raise dot brice of milik.

Vonce Mary vent along to schurch,
 Yust like a good, schweet girl ;
 Und all at vonce dot lamb vos dere,
 A yumpin' like a squir'l.

Und every leedle poy and girl
 Begin to laugh and schmile ;
 Und den dot lamb he yell so loud
 You hear him ha'f a mile.

Und ven dot breacher, goot ole soul,
 He say, " Schweet lamb, gone out !"
 Dot lamb he schtand upon his head,
 Und vag his dail about.

Und den he makes an awful yump,
 Und dumbles on his zide ;
 Und Mary cry so awful loud, —
 She daught dot lamb vos died.

But no : he only blay a drick,
 To make his Mary fear ;

Vor, ven she patted dat vooley head,
 He valked off mit his ear.

Den Mary she vos awful shamed,
 Dot lamb put on sooch style ;
 Und she vish he vos away from her
 'Bout forty dousan' mile.

But ven dot lamb he kum mit her
 Und vink mit his left eye,
 Dot Mary velt her bosum schvell,
 Und she pegins to cry.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear! mine leedle lamb,"
 Dot Mary cry so sad,
 "Vy follow me aroundt like dis?
 I fear I schall go mad."

Und ven dot lamb he hear her cry,
 Und look like she vos sick,
 He turned sheep's eyes upon dot girl,
 Und runs home mighty guick.

Den Mary she vos offel glad
 Dot lamb vos run away ;
 Und den indo dot schurch she goes, —
 Dot blace to zing und bray.

But yust so soon she quiets down,
 Und dinks of dot lamb no more,
 Und every von vas zinging himes.
 Dere cums an offel roar.

Den Mary givs an offel sehtart,
 Und runs outh mit all her might;
 Vor vell she knew dot offel lamb
 Would soon cum into zight.

Und, sure enough, along a road
 Vot leaded down vrom a hill
 A putcher-poy, mit knife in hant,
 Vos after dot lamb to kill.

Und every yump dot lamb would make
 Dot putcher-poy would shout:
 "Mine kingdom vor dot Mary's lamb,
 To cut his gizzards outh!"

Und over hills und over dales,
 Und over dreis und schtumps,
 Und over fields und vences dall,
 Mit forty dousan' yumps,

Dot lamb und putcher-poy vos vent,
 Mit roars and noises loud.
 Dot lamb he looked, as he yumped along,
 Yust like a schnow-vite cloud.

But dot putcher-poy vos outh mit bret';
 Dot lamb he could not harms:
 Und Mary's pet, mit one great yump,
 Vos gattered mit her arms.

THE LESSON OF A DREAM.

AS every care-burdened hour passed,
 From the steeple's giddy height
 The bells pealed out their echoes
 On the silent, solemn night.

At last I slept, and, dreaming, heard
 The wail of a hungry child ;
 And the figure of Want passed by me,
 Haggard and gaunt and wild.

And I saw a thousand little faces,
 All hollow-eyed and thin,
 In hovels and in misery
 Where this figure glided in.

And I heard the groans of husbands,
 And I saw the tears of wives,
 As this figure stood before them,
 And they battled for their lives.

And I saw the broken windows
 That rattled hoarse and loud ;
 And the frost that hung upon them
 Gleamed whiter than a shroud.

And I awoke with the city's waking,
 Strengthened in my despair ;
 For in a dream I'd learned
 What others have to bear.

A CREED THAT'S NOT A CREED.

YOU ask my creed? I have none; for,
 In this greatest age of earth,
 A creed would bind me to beliefs of the past:
 And in a few years, worried and harassed,
 I'd fear Progression's greater birth.

No: I have no creed to change
 As onward roll the coming days,
 And call my own with doubt, amid the jeers
 Of Science, ringing out the old beliefs of years,
 And sounding the purer notes of praise.

No: I am no friend to any creed,
 For this one sublime reason:
 My faculties must be free in this great age
 To think, hope, and investigate. Do not rage,
 My friend: 'tis not unholy treason.

No creed at all? No; I want none.
 My mind must not be fettered:
 I must advance abreast of all things new.
 Your creeds retard me; their steps are slow and few;
 And with them I'd not be bettered.

Mental freedom! No creeds for me;
 Immortality, hell, or heaven,
 I'd be free to think upon, meditate, and muse

To my own liking. This your creeds refuse,
Though from God you say they're given.

Think of these grander, higher thoughts,
And yet with you adopt a creed?
No, no! When with your Church I say, "This I believe,"
I cannot think else, unless I deceive, —
The hypocrite's unmanly deed.

Need for thinking otherwise? Yes.
On all things without your church wall
I'd reason freely; not as your creed binds me,
But as the circumstance of thought finds me,
If reason I dare at all.

Creeds are unnatural. Men are
All unlike, and Nature view
From their own organizations; reading the pages
Of Creation's grand volume through all the ages,
In search of truths sublime and new.

The wiser man, he of unbelief,
Reads clothed in mental liberty.
He seeks to learn the underlying cause
Of all of Nature's varied natural laws
With mind unprejudiced and free.

And men know the good intuitively, —
The higher truth, the pure and right.
What need, then, of creeds? They are at best but crude,
The lingering, dying thoughts of ages old and rude,
The dreams of intellectual night.

WHO KNOWETH?

WHO doth know, ah, who, the unknown thread of life,
 Woven through all the future years?
 And yet the loom of Time weaves on and on,
 Through all our days of hopes and fears,
 Unto the end.

Who doth know if joy or sorrow shall be ours
 In the days that are to be?
 If Fortune's smiles shall light on us
 And brighten our destiny?
 Ah, who can tell?

Life's pictures are filled with shades and shadows,
 And joys in which they blend;
 Hope brightens the hazy distance;
 But the ever-nearing end,
 Ah, who doth know?

A SUNDAY ON THE CRIPPEWA

A WAY from the screech of the whistles
 And the Christians' clanging bells;
 Out from the noise and din of the city,
 Forgetting a world so wanting in pity,
 My being in gladness dwells.

Here I'll rest. Great pines above me rise,
 Surrounded by Autumn's wealth.
 The silent day is about to die;
 The sun shines low in a hazy sky;
 The air is laden with health.

O Nature! I list to your teachings,
 As softly yon river glides by;
 And winds in the tree-tops are playing,
 With Autumn tints gladly arraying,
 Wild but harmoniously.

Hallowed peace around me everywhere,
 Though a thousand sermons call
 To my faculties all delighted;
 For my reason is not benighted,
 Not a creed is here at all.

My seat is free. Prim Fashion is not here
 With her affected air ;
 And doctrines horrible are not heard,
 To chill and anger better natures stirred
 To happiness from despair.

Atonements, infantile damnation,
 The elects' salvation,
 Predestination, and that awful hell, —
 Such doctrines cannot here a moment dwell
 Mid autumn's fair creation.

All is too grandly fair and beautiful
 For these ancient, musty creeds
 To share my thoughts mid these grand old trees,
 And Nature's music playing symphonies
 That rouse me to nobler deeds.

Hark to the spirit of Nature speaking,
 And the hymn of the Autumn sung !
 The wild heart of the woods is bounding ;
 A benediction is gladly sounding ;
 An anthem of praise is rung.

Perfection, progression, and truth,
 And love of our fellow-men,
 With faithfulness and purity, —
 These are our greater surety
 Of joy and happiness. Amen !

LULLABY.



SEA! dost thou hear
 My baby bear, cooing to my knee
 And clapping her little hands?
 She hears thy waves surge soothingly
 Upon the sloping sands
 In lullaby.

O Sea! dost thou know
 My baby sleeps on her mother's breast,
 As the wind comes o'er thy lea?
 Her baby cares are all at rest,
 While wares are tossing free
 In lullaby.

Oh, sleep, sleep, my babe!
 Sleep on and dream. The sea shall sing
 While thy mother watches thee;
 And surging waves and winds shall bring
 Their soothing psalmistry
 In lullaby.

THE IRISH PICNIC.

FROM Time's fathomless ocean, each drop is a day,
 Unceasingly descending the fall of eternity ;
 The mist atoms slowly rising, then lost in the skies,
 Are the lives of men fading from Memory's eyes ;
 The bow ever changing o'er the gulf deep and vast
 Is the first love of youth, too beautiful to last ;
 The deep waters rushing in madness and strife
 Is the bustle and worry and the labors of life ;
 And the bubbles that float for a moment, and burst,
 Are men's fevered ambitions, dying of thirst.
 Each day of the millions brings with it its cares,
 Its moments of pleasure, its griefs, and its snares ;
 Each hour of each cycle may wreck or make happy a life ;
 Each moment may be the parent of joy or of strife ;
 A love may be born that gods envy to share
 From a sunbeam that falls on a maid's golden hair ;
 And there may come a life of woe and wretched unrest
 From the first thought of true love that enters the breast.
 But such thoughts are wearying and full of unrest :
 To many this life is but a burden at best,
 So darkened with error that the bright rays of truth
 Only fall on our manhood from the sun of our youth.

Oh, me soul it is weary ! let it wander away
 To the beautiful island far over the say,

Where once more I am free in the land I love best
 Where the bones of me kindred are laid in their rest.
 Ah, sweet memories remain of those bright, happy days
 We spent in old Ireland; and no praise
 Is too great for the green isle we have left,
 For its sufferin' people, of liberty bereft,
 For its skies an' its hills, an' its meadows so green
 An' its lakes that glimmer an' glisten an' sheen
 In the sunlight wid flashes as quick an' as bright
 As the glistening diamond when held in the light.
 But to me patriotism I must give a truce,
 For in these sad days it's of little use
 To be proud of ould Ireland: our country is gone,
 An' its entire long history a story of wrong.

Our last drink we had there was hard to bate,
 And its many good things to drink an' to ate,
 An' its wit an' its beauty that gathered there
 To memorize havin' old Ireland the fair.
 Though sad to depart from the land that we loved,
 The joy in our souls wud still come above;
 For 'twas the day before sailing to this land of the free
 An' leavin' the ould for the new country.

'Twas in summer, in the bright month of June,
 When Nature has all her sweet music in tune;
 When birds sing in the air, an' up in the trees
 The winds play a melody in the green leaves;
 When the buds have all bursted in bloom,
 An' the daisies the carpet of Nature illumine;

When souls are happy, an' hearts are light,
 An' the eyes of all maidens, like stars in the night,
 Gleam brightly wid love an' wid song,
 An' cares fade into happiness all the day long.

But let poetry alone. Of the picnic I'll tell,
 An' of the many goings-on that befell
 The whole party of us, that now I'll count o'er
 If I can remember their names any more.
 Let me see: the two O'Swatigans, that's wan —
 Now, be the piper to Moses! before I've begun
 I see a mistake. The two O'Swatigans last
 I'll put next, to save countin' so fast.
 The two O'Swatigans, wan. Wan, do ye's mind;
 Oh, hunt the world o'er, an' ye'll not find
 A bull like that. Then there was — O'Rouke,
 The blind fiddler who fell in the brook,
 Making three. An' then there was lame Flinn,
 Who fell over the buttermilk-jar on his shin,
 An' broke his shoulder-blade, — an' he was four;
 An' his swate little partner, Kathleen Moore,
 Wid the flashin' black eyes, that put in a fix
 The heart of Tim Mulvaney, who made six.
 Me own partner I won't count, — the little Widdy McGee,
 Wid the great, big fortune, who was after me.
 An' then, be St. Patrick! another wan came, —
 A moighty foine gentleman, whose name
 Was O'Gilligan, an' he was sevin;
 Wid a partner whose smile wud send ye to heaven
 A-horseback, — Oh, the swate little girl,

Wild as the blizzards that sweeped his head from the
That he had the right to his blue
By my name, an' it was right
McCue was rich, an' his name was on, --
A beautiful power character, be it said, from the
An' them's the kind of the old, -- McCue
An' on his own learning, Miss McCue
Who old jig told the last on the floor;
An' she was the best. But then, there was money
For O'Toole, an' his old name was not
One squaked an' tumbled us down the stairs
It is different. An' for this night, old name
One who is a snow-bank, but very plain
For that old name'd yaller spot the old name
She'd drinkish the head of us old men
With the wings of butter-milk, an' old name
An' whistling, happy enough to the old name
Of every man in the party, an' every one
To make us old men an' as old as the old name

An' then it was a swate spot, where the old name
Where, spread out on the grass in a beautiful place
The old whiskey and new buttermilk was set
In such temptin' display that the mouth of me yet
Waters, an' the stomach of me feels warm
At the swate memory of that day, whose charm
Will never melt till me last hour is done,
An' old grim Death the victory has won.

An' spakin' of death, reminds me of McCue,
Who'd drink more whiskey, an' buttermilk too,

Than anny six of us there ; for, mind ye,
 He tuk to it as a duck to water, kindly.
 But when he got full, an' mellow an' tipsy,
 Miss Quinn, as full of ould Nick as a gypsy,
 Says to him : " Like Death on the pale horse ye look."
 An' answered McCue : " Did ye get that out of a book ?
 An' arrah now, hould a bit," says he,
 " I'm not Death on a horse, but death on whiskey ! "

Now this smartness of McCue started thim all, every wan ;
 An' to stories an' jokes all our tongues then ran,
 An' the funniest, queerest that ever was spun,
 Sparkling all over wid rale ould Irish fun,
 That wud make a man laugh upon his death-bed,
 An' the bride at the altar afore she was wed.
 An' some I'll tell to ye's, though not a wan-half
 Of the wans that was tould wid manny a laugh.
 The first was O'Rourke's : tellin' how wan night
 His ould father cum home mighty tight,
 An', after takin' a bit of a nap in the barn,
 Cum into the kitchen, an' swallowed a ball of yarn
 Dropped into the buttermilk-jar that day
 By the little girls an' boys whin at play ;
 For the ould man had becum mighty dry,
 An' he grabbed the first jar that chanced to be nigh.
 But when it passed down, he opened his mug,
 An' yelled, " Holy murther ! I've swallowed a straddle-bug ! "
 An' whin the ould woman an' all the childer
 Cum rannin' about, he only grew wilder
 Wid yellin' an' jumpin' ; an' thin he grew pale,

And the maiden of all maids the fairest,
 Of all womanly types the rarest,
 With eyes like the blue depths of heaven the bluest,
 With heart of all womanly hearts the truest,
 With brow like the lily the whitest,
 With step like the moonbeam the lightest,
 With laugh like a lake echo the purest,
 With faith of all womanly faiths the surest ;
 Maid whose cheeks were like twin roses in bloom,
 Maid of the amber hair, rich in perfume,
 Sweet Nora, the lily, maid of my dreams !
 On Memory's bright canvas thy picture still gleams,
 For Love was the artist who painted it there
 In Hope's brightest tints, with no shades of despair :
 O picture of Memory ! though exiled and lonely,
 It is rich that I am, possessing thee only.

For rale ould fun that makes a man young,
 An' for all the rich pleasures that ever were sung,
 'Tis hard to bate picnics upon the ould sod,
 The land of enjoyment wherever 'tis trod.
 Though wid live poverty at home,
 An' wid dead trade in her marts,
 Irish wit an' enjoyment
 Reigns supreme in all hearts.

ONLY A ROSE.

I PLACED a rose on my love's warm breast,
 From whence in death only to part;
 And I kissed the pillow that soothed it to rest,
 And I knew the soul of the rose was blessed,
 For it felt every beat of her heart.

And I thought that if I were blessed like the rose,
 My life I'd exchange with the flower;
 And smile in Love's joy at the lot that I chose,
 Could I like the rose on her bosom repose,
 And like the rose die in an hour.

But thou only, O rose, in loving entwine
 On her bosom art welcome to lie;
 And I envy the life that only is thine,
 To feel the warmth of that bosom divine.
 And to die the death that you die.

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